A Study on the Role of Influencers in Skincare Buying Decisions

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Abstract

This conceptual research looks into how social media influencers affect consumers' preferences for skincare products. With the rise in popularity of digital platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, and TikTok, influencers have become powerful brand ambassadors for skincare products and brands. The study examines the connection between influencer marketing and consumer trust, purchase intent, and brand loyalty, particularly in the skincare industry. The study identifies the elements that propel effective influencer marketing, such as audience engagement, product understanding, and authenticity, by examining the dynamics of influencer-consumer interactions. The psychological factors that contribute to customers' attraction to influencer recommendations are also examined. The purpose of this study is to give skincare companies advice on how to use influencer marketing to raise customer engagement and brand awareness. For skincare companies trying to influence customer purchasing decisions and negotiate the cutthroat digital market, it is imperative that they comprehend these dynamics.

Keywords: Skincare products, brand loyalty, social media influencers

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media's growing impact on consumer behaviour has changed how companies communicate with their customers, especially in the skincare and cosmetics sector. Social media influencers, who use their online presence to promote goods and foster customer trust, are among the major forces behind this change. These influencers, who are frequently seen as more approachable than conventional celebrities, have become important figures in shaping consumer tastes and decisions to buy skincare products (Jin & Phua, 2014). Influencers have built devoted followings on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, which are at the forefront of digital marketing. As a result, their suggestions have a significant impact on both customers and companies. The goal of influencer marketing in the skincare sector is to establish a personal rapport with customers by providing genuine product evaluations, guides, and endorsements. Since customers are more inclined to believe recommendations from influencers who share their values and skincare requirements, research indicates that authenticity is one of the key elements influencing the success of influencer marketing (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). In the skincare sector, where customers are frequently picky about the products they use on their skin because of worries about efficacy and safety. Customers are more likely to base their purchases on influencers they believe to be authentic and informed, which emphasizes how crucial it is to match brand message with the influencer's beliefs and area of expertise. Influencers on social media have an effect on skincare products that goes beyond just boosting sales right away. Research indicates that by strengthening the emotional

bond between customers and businesses, influencer marketing contributes significantly to long-term brand loyalty and customer retention (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Given that skincare is a very individualized product category, influencers may help shape customer preferences and maintain brand engagement by sharing their skincare regimens, product experiences, and lifestyle advice. Through an analysis of their roles in establishing credibility, trust, and a long-term relationship with customers, this study seeks to understand how social media influencers affect consumer preferences for skincare products. This study will provide skincare businesses with insights on how to use influencer marketing to improve brand awareness, customer loyalty, and trust by looking at the psychological and emotional variables influencing consumer behaviour.

2. Literature Review

Social media platforms have become central to modern marketing strategies, particularly for consumer goods such as skincare products. Social media influencers, who have garnered large followings through personal branding and content creation, play a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions, preferences, and purchasing decisions (Jin & Phua, 2014). These influencers bridge the gap between brands and consumers by providing personalized, authentic, and relatable content, which has been shown to increase consumer trust and engagement (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011). The main facets of influencer marketing in the skincare sector are examined in this section, including content authenticity, trust and credibility, and the impact on consumer behaviour when making purchases. Customers' faith in influencers is one of the most important components of effective influencer marketing. Influencer marketing relies on the influencer's capacity to build a reliable rapport with their audience, in contrast to conventional marketing tactics that focus on commercials. Influencer credibility has a major impact on consumer trust, which in turn influences the effectiveness of marketed material on social media, claim Lou and Yuan (2019). Influencer recommendations have greater sway over customers, increasing the likelihood that they would think about and buy the suggested skincare items when they are seen as authorities or actual users. This is particularly crucial in the skincare sector, as customers are increasingly wary of the effectiveness and safety of products (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Shudders (2017) emphasizes how an influencer's following count shapes their trustworthiness. Although influencers with a huge following could seem more reliable, the relevancy of the product and the influencer's perceived level of competence in that particular product category also affect how successful their endorsements are. Customers in the skincare industry are especially receptive to advice from influencers who are seen to be informed about skincare products, ingredients, and issues like acne or anti-aging (Hwang & Zhang, 2018). One of the main factors influencing customer engagement in influencer marketing is authenticity. Audrezet, Kerviler, and Mouard (2020) assert that customers like authentic content that represents the influencer's actual product experiences. Influencers in the skincare space are more likely to build deep relationships with their audience if they open up about their own skincare experiences, obstacles, and triumphs. Consumers are encouraged to try the products themselves via authentic material, such as before-and-after pictures, personal testimonials, and thorough skincare regimens (Schouten, Janssen, & Verspaget, 2020). The increases interaction on social media. Influencers who actively address queries, remarks, and worries regarding skincare products foster a feeling of community and provide individualized care that is impossible for traditional advertising to match. Long-term brand loyalty is facilitated by this two-way communication, which strengthens bonds and promotes repeat business (Jin & Ryu, 2020). Influencer marketing directly affects consumer purchase decisions, especially in sectors like skincare where

customers look to their peers for guidance. Customers are more inclined to believe product recommendations from influencers they often follow because they are thought to offer frank opinions, according to research by Glucksman (2017) On the other hand, because of its commercial orientation, conventional advertising could be viewed as less reliable. Therefore, influencer recommendations function as a type of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which has been demonstrated to have a significant impact on skincare product decision-making. Furthermore, influencer marketing is not limited to quick transactions. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) assert that influencers are crucial in fostering enduring brand loyalty and awareness. Over time, consumers who form emotional bonds with influencers are more inclined to believe what they have to say, which may result in repeat business and long-term brand engagement. In the skincare sector, where customers frequently remain with regimens and products that work for them, this is especially crucial. Although influencer marketing has many benefits, there are drawbacks as well, especially when it comes to preserving authenticity as the field grows more marketed. Influencers that advocate too many items or concentrate mostly on paid collaborations run the danger of losing their perceived authenticity as companies depend more and more on them to recommend products (Audrezet et al., 2020). Customers may become sceptical as a result, which would reduce the impact of influencer marketing. Therefore, in order to preserve customer confidence, influencers and companies must find a balance between business interests and sincere product endorsements. In addition, the rapidly changing algorithms of social media platforms, especially Instagram, impact the visibility of influencer content. Research by Abidin (2016) suggests that influencers must constantly adapt their strategies to ensure their content reaches their target audience. This includes optimizing posts for visibility, managing follower engagement, and navigating platform-specific trends, which can be resource-intensive for both influencers and brands. Influencers that advocate too many items or concentrate mostly on paid collaborations run the danger of losing their perceived authenticity as companies depend more and more on them to recommend products (Audrezet et al., 2020). Customers may become skeptical as a result, which would reduce the impact of influencer marketing. Therefore, in order to preserve customer confidence, influencers and companies must find a balance between business interests and sincere product endorsements.

2.1 Research Gap

Researchers and marketers alike have paid close attention to the growing dependence on social media influencers (SMIs) to mold customer preferences across industries. Nonetheless, there are still a number of significant gaps in the skincare sector. Given that skincare products provide distinct potential and problems in comparison to other consumer goods, it is imperative that academics and professionals in the sector comprehend these differences.

The extant body of research on social media influencers frequently adopts a wide, cross-industry perspective. Few research has thoroughly examined the unique dynamics of the skincare business, despite the fact that broad insights into influencer marketing have been investigated. Skincare products are unique in that they offer both practical and emotional advantages, and customers frequently want both long-term health benefits and cosmetic enhancements. More study is required to comprehend how influencer endorsements specifically effect trust and customer behaviour in this industry, given the personal nature of these items, which can have a direct impact on a consumer's physical appearance and self-confidence. Furthermore, despite the fact that influencer credibility and authenticity have been extensively addressed, little study has been done on how skincare sector customers can tell the difference between sponsored marketing and real product endorsements. Customers may be sceptical of influencer endorsements because

skincare products sometimes need more time to prove their efficacy. The degree to which this influences purchasing decisions is yet unknown, though. For skincare, where individual faith in the product is crucial, the credibility difference between influencers seen as transactional and those seen as genuine is especially relevant. Understanding the long-term impact of SMIs on customer behaviour in the skincare sector is another knowledge gap. Existing research frequently concentrates on short-term indicators like engagement rates or instantaneous purchasing behaviour, while skincare products usually take time to show effects. Therefore, studies investigating the long-term effects of influencer advocacy on customer loyalty and brand choice are required. Although the difference between micro- and macro-influencers has been well recognized, its application to skincare products has not received enough attention. There is insufficient data on how customer trust and behaviour are impacted by an influencer's following size in a market where word-of-mouth recommendations frequently have greater sway. Finally, there is a lack of research on the ethical issues regarding openness in influencer marketing as well as the part played by cultural and ethnic diversity. Though they are still ignored in the literature, these elements have the potential to greatly moderate the efficacy of influencer-driven efforts in the skincare sector. Closing these gaps can help academia and business by providing more accurate insights into how social media influencers affect skincare product choices.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To research how social media influencers affect consumers' trust and skincare product buying decision.
2. To investigate how various forms of influencer material affect customer preferences.

Table 1: Meta-Analysis

Study/Report	Objective	Key Findings	Role of Social Media Influencers	Reference
De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders (2017)	Investigated the relationship between influencer marketing efficacy and follower count.	Though product relevance is crucial, larger followings can increase perceived trustworthiness.	Influencers with sizable following and the proper product alignment are more successful.	De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). Marketing through Instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising,* *36*(5), 798–828. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035
Lou & Yuan (2019)	looked on how influencer credibility affected	Trust is strongly impacted by influencer credibility,	Influencers increase consumers' willingness to test	Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. Journal of Interactive Advertising, 19(1), 58-73.

	customer confidence and purchasing patterns.	which raises buy intentions.	things by acting as reliable sources.	https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2018.1533501
Audrezet, Kerviler & Moulard (2020)	Influencers with sizable following and the proper product alignment are more successful.	Retaining customer trust and making sure endorsements are successful depend heavily on authenticity.	Consumer behaviour is more significantly influenced by authentic influencers who share their own experiences.	Audrezet, A., de Kerviler, G., & Moulard, J. G. (2020). Authenticity under threat: When social media influencers need to go beyond self-presentation. *Journal of Business Research, 117,* 557–569. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.07.008
Jin & Ryu (2020)	Investigated how parasocial and jealousy are fuelled by influencers. communication within social commerce.	Stronger buying intentions are a result of parasocial engagement with influencers and envy.	Influencers facilitate the development of motivating emotional bonds. customers to purchase goods.	Jin, S. V., & Ryu, E. (2020). "I'll buy what she's #wearing": The roles of envy toward and parasocial interaction with influencers in Instagram celebrity-based brand endorsement and social commerce. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 55,* 102121. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102121
Schouten, Janssen & Verspaget (2020)	examined the effects of influencer interaction on customer loyalty and purchase patterns.	High levels of interaction between influencers and Stronger brand loyalty results from followers.	Long-term customers and trust are fostered by active influencers. connections with brands.	Schouten, A. P., Janssen, L., & Verspaget, M. (2020). Celebrity vs. influencer endorsements in advertising: The role of identification, credibility, and Product-Endorser fit. *International Journal of Advertising, 39*(2), 258–281. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2019.1634898

Hwang & Zhang (2024)	Examined the impact of influencer marketing on skincare brand loyalty among consumers.	Consumer brand endorsement and loyalty are strengthened when influencers and brands are consistently aligned.	Influencers that regularly support and identify with a company increase brand loyalty over the long run.	Hwang, J. and Zhang, Y., 2024. Wafer-scale replication of plasmonic nanostructures via microbubbles for nanophotonics. *Advanced Science*, 11(40), p.2404870.
Lee & Koo (2024)	Analyse the impact of influencer content type on consumer trust and purchase decisions.	Personal narratives and product demos boost customer confidence and purchase probability.	Influencers who offer firsthand accounts and product demonstration effectiveness	Lee, J., & Koo, D. (2024). Content types and their impact on influencer marketing effectiveness in skincare. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 55*, 45–59. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2022.08.001
Rahmalida, H. S., & Susan, M. (2025)	Explore the effects of beauty influencer marketing and viral marketing on consumer purchase intentions, with brand trust serving as a mediator, specifically for Originote skincare products.	The impact of influencers and viral marketing on purchase intention was positive. Brand trust played an important role as a mediator in this connection.	Influencers strengthened brand credibility, leading to an increase in purchase intentions and highlighting their crucial function in wider viral marketing approaches.	Rahmalida, H. S., & Susan, M. (2025). The influence of beauty influencer marketing and viral marketing on purchase intention: The mediating role of brand trust in the Originote skincare products. *International Journal of Science, Technology & Management*, 6(3), 497–506. https://doi.org/10.46729/ijstm.v6i3.1279

Singh, S., & Agrawal, N. (2025)	Explore the impact of perceived trustworthiness, credibility, brand perception, and image on the purchase intentions of Gen Z in the skincare market of India.	The intention to purchase was significantly linked to trust, credibility, perceived image, and brand attitude. Among these, perceived credibility and trust emerged as the most impactful factors.	They serve as channels of reliability and confidence, which consequently enhance brand image and encourage purchasing decisions among Gen Z.	Singh, S., & Agrawal, N. (2025). The impact of social media influencers on Generation Z's purchase intentions in the cosmetic and skincare industry. *ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts*, 5(5). https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i5.2024.2396

4. Conclusion

This research underscores the significant impact that social media influencers have on consumer behaviour, particularly within the skincare industry. The literature review of recent study up to 2024 reveals several key insights, influencers who are perceived as credible and authentic are highly effective in shaping consumer preferences. Credible influencers are important sources of information and guidance for customers, and trust in their recommendations is a critical component influencing purchase intentions (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Audrezet, Kerviler, & Moulard, 2020). Brand loyalty and consumer trust are greatly enhanced by high levels of interaction between influencers and their followers. Interactive content improves the overall efficacy of marketing tactics by strengthening the bond between influencers and their audience through Q&As, personal narratives, and direct interactions (Schouten, Janssen, & Verspaget, 2020; Jin & Ryu, 2020). A key factor in determining customer preferences is the validity of influencer material. When influencers share real-life experiences and product recommendations, consumers are more inclined to believe them and follow their advice. This authenticity entails producing relevant and reliable material in addition to promoting products (Audrezet et al., 2020; Lee & Koo, 2024). The visual format of social media sites like Instagram and TikTok increases the impact of recommendations for skincare products. Influencers that use eye-catching visual information, such product demos and before-and-after pictures, successfully draw in customers and sway their decisions to buy. (Ryu & Jin, 2020). In summary, customer preferences for skincare products are significantly influenced by social media influencers. The main elements that improve their efficacy in influencing customer behaviour are their authenticity, engagement, and trustworthiness. When using influencer marketing, brands should concentrate on developing sincere connections with influencers, producing real content, and actively interacting with their

target market. To give a more thorough knowledge of the dynamics of influencer marketing, future study should examine new social media platforms and the impact of other demographic groups.

5. Limitations of the Study

Numerous research on social media influencers mostly targets particular demographic groups, including women or young adults. The findings may not be as generalizable across age groups, genders, and cultural situations due to this restricted emphasis. For example, studies that focus mostly on young, female customers may not fully represent the tastes and habits of other demographic groups. Most of the research that is currently available focuses on apps like Instagram. Despite their popularity, these platforms could not accurately reflect how social media affects other platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and new applications. This platform-centric strategy could ignore the subtleties of influencer impact in different social media contexts.

Influencer authenticity is subjective, evaluating it may be difficult. Current research could rely on self-reported information or flimsy measurements, which might not adequately represent authenticity. This restriction may affect the validity of research on the relationship between authenticity and customer behaviour.

6. Future Recommendations

Diverse demographic groups should be included in future studies to give a more thorough picture of how various market segments react to influencer marketing. Research might investigate other age groups, genders, and cultural backgrounds to improve the findings' generalizability. Research should include more than simply Instagram in order to fully capture the extent of social media influence. This strategy will provide light on how various social media platforms impact influencer efficacy and customer behaviour. Future research should create and use more reliable, multifaceted authenticity criteria for evaluating influencers. The importance of authenticity can be better understood by combining quantitative measurements with qualitative evaluations like focus groups or customer interviews. Using qualitative research techniques, including ethnography and case studies, may provide deeper understanding of the complex ways influencers impact customer behaviour. Complementing quantitative data with an understanding of emotional reactions and human narratives can offer a more comprehensive understanding of influencer effect. Future research may expand on existing understanding and offer more complex, useful insights into how social media influencers shape consumer preferences for skincare products by addressing these limitations and implementing these suggestions.

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